

17154
*True Religion the only Foundation of true
Courage.*

A
S E R M O N

Preached at the

HORSE-GUARDS,

FRIDAY the 17th of February, 1758.

BEING THE

DAY appointed for a GENERAL FAST.

Particularly addressed to the Military Gentlemen.

By **JOSHUA KYTE, M. A.**

Student of Christ Church, Oxford, and Preacher at the
Horse-Guards.

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True Religion the only Foundation of true
RIGHT, & HONOURABLE

AND
A
SERMON
THE OFFICERS
Preached at the

HORSE-GUARDS,
THE GENTLEMEN

FRIDAY the 17th of February, 1758.



DAY appointed for a GENERAL FAST.
HORSE AND GRENADIER
Particularly addressed to the Gentlemen

By JOSEPH A. SKIDMORE, A.M.

Student of Christ Church, Oxford, and Preacher at the
St. Andrew's Church, Brixton

at the request of the OFFICERS

LONDON

Printed for B. Baskin, in Pall-mall, near the
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THE AUTHOR

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
AND
HONOURABLE
THE OFFICERS,
AND TO
THE GENTLEMEN,
OF
HIS MAJESTY'S
HORSE AND GRENADIER
GUARDS,

THIS DISCOURSE,
MADE PUBLICK,

At the Request of the GUARD,
Then Present,

Is, with Great Respect, Addressed by

The AUTHOR.

TO THE
 RIGHT HONOURABLE
 AND
 HONOURABLE
 THE OFFICERS
 OF THE
 HIS MAJESTY'S
 HORSE AND GRENADIER
 GUARDS
 THIS DISCOURSE
 MADE PUBLIC
 At the Request of the GUARD,
 In with Great Respect, Addressed by
 THE AUTHOR



and to show you that they are all to be
found in Righteousness: and their con-
-PROVERBS xxviii. I.

*The Wicked flee, when no Man pur-
sueth, but the Righteous are bold
as a Lion.*

WE are plainly instructed by the
words before us, that Sin and
Wickedness naturally tend to dishearten
and make Cowards of Mankind; but
Righteousness and Goodness to encourage
and embolden them. Now Courage and
Resolution being very necessary ingredients
in the composition of the Military Char-
acter; as well as truly Christian Virtues;
I think the Subject I have chosen comes
peculiarly recommended to us upon the
present Occasion; and will afford us some
useful observations, not improper for this
Place, or the Solemnity of the Day.

To confirm and illustrate the Wise
Man's proposition, I shall endeavour (with
as much brevity as possible) to represent
to you what those things are which usu-
ally contribute to make Men courageous;

CHAP.

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and

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and to shew you that they are all to be found in Righteousness; and their contraries in Wickedness.

In the prosecution of which Discourse, I hope to convince You, that the best way to be good Soldiers, is to be good Men: for though You may furnish Yourselfes with art and conduct in the field, and fortify your bodies with every kind of armour, yet upon reflection You will find no just confidence, no real security, but in the *Armour of God*; viz. in the belief and practice of true Religion.

And here I would not have it understood that I mean to promote a Spirit of Implacability or Revenge, a Spirit of Rapine or Violence among us; that would ill become a Preacher of the Gospel, whose business it is to speak peace to the World: but since we are entered into a just and necessary War, it behoves us to acquit ourselves like Men; and therefore I shall think myself excusable, in attempting to point out some of those methods which may enable us to acquire and deserve success; may
enable

enable us to lay the foundations of an honourable Peace, and give bounds to the Sword, that is over-running our Land.

In this undertaking we can have little hope to succeed, unless strengthened and assisted by courage and resolution; now in order to make Men truly valiant and courageous, it is in the

first place absolutely necessary that their Passions and Appetites should be kept under proper discipline and subjection; for unless a Man's passions are subdued to his reason, he will have little or no presence of mind in dangers or difficulties; when Reason and Reflection should counsel and advise him; his understanding will be lost in clouds and darkness; guilt and uneasiness will confuse and distract him. But when once a Man has gained a Conquest over himself and his Passions, (the noblest of all Conquests) he will be free from every anxiety: no Danger will be able to dissipate his Resolution, or divide him from himself: tho'

Death and Destruction stare him in the face, and all the horrors of blood and slaughter are round about him; his mind will be animated with such invincible thoughts, and guarded with such noble considerations, that no outward force will be able to approach it. Calm Serenity and smiling Hope will arise from a reflection on his Innocence and Virtue; the genuine Source, and most effectual cause of Courage and Magnanimity. As for the Wicked, it is not so with them; they have neither prospect of Safety from without, or Peace from within. When Danger approaches them, they are wretched indeed; without assistance from Reason, without hope from Religion. The Principles of Infidelity which they once relied upon now begin to fail them; what was formerly their triumph, is now their distress; and instead of ministring any comfort or confidence to them, pierce and torment their then tumultuous breasts, and only serve to increase their Misery and Despair. I come now,

Idly,

Idly. To consider the necessity of being early accustomed to endure difficulties and inconveniences; to be inured to heat and cold, watchings and fastings: for besides the moral advantages arising from such a Conduct; as the mortifying our lusts, and restraining our vicious habits; these vigorous exercises will harden and corroborate the constitution and temper of mind, and inspire courageous principles; by calling into action every generous and manly Virtue: while on the other hand, softness and delicacy will melt and dissolve the firmest resolution. By indulgence in pleasure, and surfeiting in ease and voluptuousness, our minds are broken and dispirited, become languid, faint, and enervated, ready to shrink at the least touch of evil, or appearance of Danger. It may be said indeed that the courage of Individuals in particular, or Nations in general, is much owing to the natural strength or defect of the constitution, the different frame and habit of body, or to the temper of the Climate in which they are situated,

situated, and this argument carries with it an air of Reason and Plausibility; but if we turn our thoughts back to former Ages, or bring them home to the present scene of things; ancient and modern History, as well as our own Experience will inform us, that by the Exercise of Temperance and severe Virtue, the Inhabitants of the most effeminate Climes, have sometimes improved themselves into the most heroick and magnanimous of all Nations; and we often find that those who by the temperament of their native Air and Country are naturally the most hardy and courageous; by their dissolute and corrupt Manners have been broken and dispirited into the most wretched Cowards; and tho' once remarked for a People of a daring and undaunted Genius, have sometimes been so melted by Vice and luxury, as to fall a Prey even to the meanest and most despicable Enemy.

Now Righteousness including in it all the Virtues of Industry, Patience, and Temperance, and Mortification of our

Ap-

Appetites, effectually contributes to the confirming and hardening the tempers of Men, and taking off that softness and delicacy of spirit, which renders them so tender and impressive: consequently by exercising ourselves in such manly virtues, by inuring ourselves to an active life, and to bear evils and injuries with a noble indifference; by reducing our appetites to the standard of Nature, and sometimes moderately disciplining them with fasting and abstinence; we shall by degrees be so steeled against hardships and difficulties, that what would startle and terrify weak and effeminate minds, will scarce be able to make any impression upon us.

Wickedness on the contrary enervates and dissolves the temper, by letting loose the desires and appetites of our flesh, to sensuality and voluptuousness, to rioting and drunkenness, to chambering and wantonness, with all the unmanly train of pleasurable sins, that like an unseasonable and overpowering deluge, will destroy the harvest of our Virtues, will sap and un-

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dermine the foundations of every thing that is good and great; emaculate the bravest and most intrepid disposition; and by degrees spoil the strain of the most valiant Nation.

When Men have been trained up in vice and effeminacy, and pampered in vanity and idleness, the least hardship or difficulty will appear terrible to them; they are fitter for the lap of pleasure, than the lifts of war; and if ever necessity should call such Heroes into the field, the Enemy would have little to fear; bad Quarters and an hard March will kill them without a battle; and tho' they may have boasted over the bowl of intemperance, or blustered in a Brothel House, the least sense of pain, or prospect of danger, will presently strike their spirits and air, and turn all their blood into a trembling jelly; tho' seemingly furious and terrible as Lions, they will on a sudden degenerate, and become timorous as Hares.

How indeed can it be expected, that they, whose constitutions are made so ten-

der by indulgence and ease, as to be offended even with the light of the Sun, or the freshness of the air, should be able to march under a load of armour all day, and perhaps freeze to the ground at night : to sleep with drums and trumpets in their ears, and to be awaked with perpetual alarms : to run on upon spears, and charge at the mouths of cannon roaring out destruction : such rude, such unpolite treatment as this, can never be endured by the soft and delicate Gentleman, or the pampered Epicure.

I now proceed to observe,

III^{dly}, That in all our undertakings due care should be had to the justice and righteousness of our cause; we should weigh and consider well the nature of our actions; and not dare to put our hands to the execution of any thing, that upon examination may appear unlawful or unjustifiable: if we do, we shall certainly want that satisfaction of mind, which is one of the principal motives, and true support of that courage and resolu-

tion I have been recommending. The Guide and Director of all our pursuits must be the Understanding; and whilst that contradicts or disapproves our actions, it is impossible for us to act with steadiness and assurance. The Man that acts with a misgiving mind, is like a benighted Traveller in a dangerous road; who pursues his way with caution and fear; knows not how to direct his trembling steps; and is in continual dread, lest he should stumble into bogs and quicksands, or be hurried down a precipice. And thus being accustomed to act with diffidence and distrust, his heart becomes creeping and timorous; and every manly and courageous principle is dissolved and melted away.

But now the righteous Man in all his undertakings hath the full consent and approbation of his mind; happy and secure in the Virtue and Innocence of his designs; and armed with the *breast-plate of Righteousness*; a defence and safeguard which the wicked Man must be a stranger

to, because the whole tenor of his proceedings is a direct contradiction to reason and justice, and an open violation of the laws of God. So that when such a Man is surrounded by Danger and Destruction from without, and terrified by Guilt and Remorse from within; his courage must of necessity fail him; his resolution must certainly sink under such a load of Dread and Desperation. His condition will not be unlike that of king Saul, after God had departed from him: *When Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.* 1 Sam. xxviii. 5.

But I hasten,

IVthly, To take notice of one thing more of the highest efficacy to promote courage and confidence; and that is, the hope and expectation of a future reward; than which nothing can be a greater incentive to virtuous actions: for as bad Men are frequently withheld from their wicked enterprizes by the fear of punishment, so good men are often animated to the noblest Achievements by

the hope of Reward. Now what expectations, what prospect can be equal to that Man's, who knows his services in this life will entitle him to a glorious immortality in the life to come. The Soul of such a Man is secure of its existence; and therefore smiles at the approach of Danger. Death is so far from bringing terrors to the righteous Man, that it opens a pleasing scene of blissful futurity: armed and inspired with such a prospect, he can charge through the deepest ranks of his Enemies with undaunted resolution; and like the Horse

Job xxxix.
22. *described in Job, He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.*

How different from this is the case of the wicked Man: how wretched is his condition when compared to that of the Righteous! for the wicked Men in a state of security and free from danger may make a mock at sin; may rid themselves of the importunity of guilty reflections; and drown the sense of an-
other

other world by intemperate draughts and loud laughter; yet we usually find that when danger becomes imminent, when the Clouds are gathered around them, and are ready to burst upon their heads, the bold Men begin to quake; a thousand stinging thoughts rush in upon their minds; and they are seized with dismal expectations of a fearful state of things on the other side the Grave. When death presents itself, with what horror and agonies must they reflect on the dreadful scene it opens to them! what a miserable uncertainty must they be in concerning those future things which before they never thought of! all their schemes are terminated by the present scene of things; and if there be any thing beyond it, if an eternal state is to commence after this, they know and confess that they have made no provision for it; that they are lost and undone for ever: and alas! how is it possible they should support their courage under these fearful thoughts! doubtless such dire forebodings as these,

which

which are the constant companions of a guilty conscience, must necessarily stagger and dismay the stoutest resolution.

I might go on to produce many numberless arguments in favour of the assertion in my text ; but, I believe, enough has been already said to convince us, that to be truly religious, is the most effectual way to become truly courageous ; or in other words, that to conquer our Vices, must be the first step towards conquering our Enemies. From hence it may be inferred, that Irreligion and Infidelity, drunkenness and profaneness, with all the appendages of riot and profligacy, are not the necessary, tho' too often thought the polite ingredients of the Military Character. Religion should be every Man's greatest happiness ; and (one would think) can be no unreputable qualification for any Man : and that the bravest Soldier need not be ashamed to appear virtuous and innocent. Well is it for them, who, by being accustomed to walk in the paths of obedience, have preserved their religious prin-

principles ; for however disgracefully esteemed by others, they will find them their highest blessing and ornament in time of peace ; and in the time of trouble their *surest refuge ; a shield and buckler in the day of battle.*

Why the Soldier should not at least be as religious and as pious as other Men, no reason can be alledged : if there be any difference, he is under greater enforcement to observe his ways, under stronger obligations to Piety and Duty to God, than most other Men. His life is not his own, when his Country calls for it ; and if he considers that the tenure of human life at best precarious, becomes more so from the dangers to which his Profession may expose him ; he will likewise consider the necessity of making a friendship with God ; of sincerely relinquishing the work of iniquity, and abounding in the work of the Lord. From such thoughts and impressions as these, he will by degrees acquire that true Religion, that Spirit of Christianity, that gave
 patience

patience to the Confessor, and Courage to the Martyr ; and inspired the first Christians with resolution to undergo and even despise the severest sufferings ; and which will still animate the Christian Soldier with a Virtue and Magnanimity, that will enable him not only to venture upon, but to glory in his danger. And if his lot should carry him to the walks of Death, he there will meet his fate with boldness and intrepidity, because he meets it not unprepared.

Before I close this head of my Discourse, I beg leave to subjoin a few words particularly addressed to You of this Honourable Corps. You are a body of Men, whose bad or good Conduct of yourselves is of very great importance to the Publick ; it is from your Discipline, all other Corps will take their Military Stamp and Impression ; from your Manners will form their Deportment ; it concerns You therefore to be instructed not only with the exactest Skill, but also with the bravest Courage ; and from whence You are to
de-

derive this hath been plainly demonstrated, even from Righteousness and universal Goodness. And it is with pleasure I have observed, that no society can be more exemplary in its behaviour, under better Regulations, or more constant in their religious course of Duty than Yourselves. By the practice of these Virtues You acquire a noble and useful Courage that will render You always, and in the truest sense, a Life-guard to your Sovereign, and an Honour to your Country. And if ever you should be called into the field of Action, it is not to be doubted, but that You would give the most signal Proofs of Fortitude and Magnanimity.

I shall now fill up the remaining part of this Discourse; in applying what has been said to the present Occasion.

We are called together this Day by the Royal Mandate, to join in a General Fast and Humiliation before Almighty God; to send up our Prayers and Supplications to the Divine Majesty in the most devout and solemn manner: that we may obtain

‘ pardon of our sins, and avert those heavy
 ‘ judgments, which our manifold provo-
 ‘ cations have most justly deserved, and
 ‘ implore the blessing and assistance of
 ‘ God on the arms of his Majesty by Sea
 ‘ and Land; in order to restore and per-
 ‘ petuate Peace, Safety, and Prosperity to
 ‘ Himself and to his Kingdoms.’

How great a Necessity there is for our heartily and sincerely uniting in this pious design, we must all be sensible, and it will be unpardonable in us not to contribute every thing in our power to promote the good ends for which it was intended.

The great train of ill success which has in general attended us during the present War, too evidently proves that the Lord has not been on our Side, neither would He *prosper the work of our hands*: either we are lost and corrupted by our Luxury and Effeminacy, and therefore are unable to acquire Success; or we have provoked God to Anger by our Impieties, and do not deserve it.

Whether our present Disgraces and Distresses

tresses may be owing to one or both of
 these causes abovementioned, I will not
 take upon me to determine : but certain
 it is, that we have not exerted ourselves
 to the Terror of our Enemies, or the Ad-
 miration of our Friends as in times past :
 the Lord hath not gone forth with our Ar- ^{Psalms}
 mies, but has made us to turn our backs upon ^{xliv. 10,}
 our Enemies; has made us to be rebuked of our ^{11, 14.}
 Neighbours; to be laughed to scorn, and had
 in derision of them that are round about us.
 The judgments and threatnings denounced
 against the Israelites in case of disobedi-
 ence, seem to be literally fulfilled in us.
 If ye keep not my Sabbaths, and reverence ^{Levit.}
 my Sanctuary, saith the Lord; if ye despise ^{xxvii. 2,}
 my Statutes, and break my Covenants, I will ^{15, 32,}
 bring the land into desolation: and your Ene-
 mies which dwell therein, shall be astonished
 at it. And upon them that are left alive of
 you, I will send a faintness into their hearts
 in the lands of their Enemies; and the sound
 of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they
 shall flee, as fleeing from a sword: and they
 shall fall when none pursueth.

It may indeed be said in praise of a few Individuals, that the Glory of the Nation is not quite decayed; that we have still some Men of Virtue and Renown among us, whose Breasts are animated by the British Genius: and who, notwithstanding the fashionable inactivity of the Age, have ventured to face and fight their Enemies; have ventured to seek success through Dangers and Difficulties; eminently distinguishing themselves in the Service, and to the Honour of their Country.

If the same glorious Spirit had diffused itself through all our mighty Men of War, we should not have been given over as a Prey to our Enemies, who have triumphed over us; our potent and inveterate Enemies, whose headstrong Ambition cannot be restrained by the strictest ties of Justice or Honour; and who by trampling on the spoils of their unhappy Neighbours, have raised themselves to their present Greatness; and now attend and watch all opportunities to raise themselves still

still higher, and make a ready way unto their further Conquests. An Enemy, whose unheard of Cruelty is scarce to be paralleled by the most barbarous Nations in former Ages: who are not satisfied with the honourable means of Victory; but even treacherously mangle the unfortunate and distressed, that Conquest or Chance have thrown into their power; and whom the laws of War, as well as common Humanity, have entitled to Protection. Was I to describe the horror and confusion, the rapine, violence, and bloodshed with which they and their savage Allies overspread the dwellings of our American Brethren; such a representation would draw tears from the most Valliant, and rouse the resentment of the most timorous Heart.

Against this Enemy are we met to implore Assistance: and if we sincerely, and with a true penitent heart humble ourselves before Almighty God, stedfastly purposing to lead a new life, and follow his holy commandments; He will yet be

our Friend ; will avert the Cloud that hangs over our heads, and interpose between us and Danger. He can weaken the hands of our most powerful Enemies ; and infatuate their Counsels ; so that the wicked Enterprizes they have devised shall not come to pass. And this He hath promised to do for good Men who are careful to please him. *When a Man's ways please the Lord, He will make even his Enemies to be at peace with him.*

Prov. xvi.
7.

And here I cannot help observing to You, that our Royal Friend and Protestant Ally, has given us very convincing proofs what great things may be done in Righteousness and a good Cause. The many glorious Victories He hath as it were miraculously gained, against an almost incredible Superiority, plainly point out to us the best and surest method to acquire and deserve success. Nothing but Religion and a trust in God, could have enabled this Illustrious Monarch even to face his formidable and numberless Adversaries ; much less to conquer and defeat

feat so powerful a Confederacy. *All na-* Psalms
tions compassed Him round about; they kept cxviii.
Him in on every side; but in the Name of 10, 11.
the Lord He destroyed them. Like the
 Centurion in the Gospel, He is a devout
 Man, and One that fears God with his
 whole house; that constant course of
 Piety and Goodness he knows will secure
 to Him *the Right Hand of the Lord; and* Psalms
the Right Hand of the Lord bringeth cxviii. 16.
mighty things to pass. A just confidence in
 the favour of Heaven, has enabled him to
 bear Evils and Injuries with a brave In-
 difference; to undergo the laborious toils
 and fatigues of War: to endure an hard
 March in the Day, and to sleep upon an
 harder Pillow at Night; to follow Victory
 through heat and cold, thirst and famine,
 sweat and blood; and to pluck it from
 the Arm of Hazard and Difficulty, where-
 with it was encompassed and surrounded.
 In short, his judgment in contriving,
 and vigour in executing the best concert-
 ed measures, will equally raise the Won-
 der and Admiration of Posterity: and his
 Virtues

Virtues and Successes will most eminently distinguish him, in the present and future Ages, by the compleat and united Character of the Man, the King, the Hero, and the Christian. *This is the Lords doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*

Pfalm
cxviii.
23.

Dan. v.
27.

But to return to ourselves: Blessed be God, we are equally entitled to success from the Goodness of our Cause; I wish we were also from the Goodness of our Lives; there, I am afraid, if weighed in the Balance, we should be found wanting. Irreligion and Infidelity, Vice and Profaneness, seem to have gained the ascendant over us; a fashionable Indifference to every thing serious and sacred has obtained more especially among those of Rank and Figure; who, as they move in an exalted sphere of life, ought to dispense the salutary Influences of a good Example. Their Vices, like their Fashions, will descend to the lower Order of People; and from Them therefore better things might be expected. But if ever Uncleaness and Lasciviousness were the Characteristick

sterilick of an Age, sheltered by Impunity; if ever Dissoluteness and Debauchery were countenanced by *Wickedness in High Places*, this is the time. *How shall I pardon thee for these things, saith the Lord?* Jeremiah
thy Children have forsaken me, and sworn by v. 7, 8, 9.
them that are no Gods: when I had fed them
to the full, they then committed Adultery,
and assembled themselves by troops in the
Harlot's houses. They were as fed horses
in the morning, every one neighed after his
Neighbour's Wife. And shall I not visit
for these things, saith the Lord, and shall
not my Soul be avenged in such a Nation as
this? Certainly the heaviest judgments
the wrath of God can inflict, are no more
than we deserve; nor can we claim any
pretensions to the Divine Favour while
we continue in our sins. But if we are
in earnest to break off the evil of our
ways; if really we desire Peace; we
know upon what terms it is to be had.
It is worth the severities of repentance,
the denying of Ungodliness and worldly
Lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and
E godly

godly for the time to come. It is well
 worth the addressing ourselves to invite
 the Divine Pity and Compassion in fasting,
 weeping, and mourning; that we *repent-*
ing of the evil of our doing, the Lord may
 Jeremiah xviii. 8. *also repent of the evil which He thought to*
do to us; be gracious to his Land, and pity
 Joel ii. 14. *his People; even return and repent, and*
leave a blessing behind Him.

When the Sentence of Destruction was
 pronounced against Nineveh; Yet forty
 days and Nineveh shall be overthrown; we
 are told, in the same Chapter, that the
 Jonah iii. *People of the City proclaimed a fast, and*
 4. 5, 8, 10. *put on sackcloth from the greatest of them,*
even to the least of them; cried mightily
unto God, and turned every one from his
evil way, and from the violence that was in
their hands: and God saw their works, that
they turned from their evil way; and God
repented of the evil that He had said He
would do unto them, and He did it not.
 And now let every one of us seriously
 consider; let us retire into our Hearts, and
 there examine the conduct of our Lives;

let us remember and apply to ourselves the example of Nineveh: our wars and distresses are from our sinful lusts; and nothing but repentance and amendment can remove either them, or the judgments due to them. In plain words; if we are desirous to secure our civil freedom; that can only be done by our religious Service: if we wish to preserve the laws of the Land, let us live in obedience to the laws of God: if we are in earnest to continue to ourselves the reformed Religion, we must leave our Vices, and reform our Lives: and lastly, we must sincerely unite to make our Peace with Heaven, before we can expect Peace and Happiness on Earth.

F I N I S.

let us remember and apply to ourselves
the example of Ninveh: our wars and
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If we wish to preserve the laws of the
land, let us live in obedience to the laws
of God: if we wish to continue
to ourselves the freedom of religion, we
must have a true and sincere
faith: and finally we must sincerely desire
to make our lives with heaven better
we can expect peace and happiness on
earth.

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